

are the co-chairs of the Congressional Future Caucus. I am proud to serve as a vice chair of this caucus which promotes policies to empower younger generations, including our young men and women in the military.

I also want to thank the outside organizations that have endorsed this bill. Namely, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, the Student Veterans of America, and the Millennial Action Project.

Let me briefly outline what the bill would do. Over 200,000 servicemembers are honorably discharged from the military each year. Many of them are under age 25, do not have a bachelor's degree, and leave the military without having secured a civilian job. Under current law, the Department of Defense is required to ensure that eligible departing servicemembers participate in the Transition Assistance Program, or TAP.

The content of TAP has evolved over the years and continues to be the subject of vigorous debate in Congress and within DOD. As presently designed, TAP's mandatory core curriculum consists of a 3-day employment workshop, 6 hours of briefing on veterans benefits, and 8 to 10 hours of briefings on topics such as translating military skills to civilian jobs and managing personal finances.

Beyond this mandatory core curriculum, eligible servicemembers are also given the option to participate in a more specialized 2-day workshop in one of the following areas: higher education, technical and skills training, or entrepreneurship.

In my view, the core curriculum is necessary, but not sufficient to enable most departing servicemembers to successfully transition to the civilian world. I believe departing servicemembers should supplement the core curriculum with at least one of these 2-day workshops so they can receive training tailored to their specific personal and professional goals, whether that involves going to school, learning a trade, or starting a business. The problem is that these 2-day workshops, precisely because they are optional, are rarely utilized.

According to a report recently released by the Government Accountability Office, fewer than 15 percent of eligible Active-Duty servicemembers participated in one of the 2-day workshops in fiscal year 2016, including only 4 percent of eligible marines.

Requiring transitioning servicemembers to opt into a 2-day workshop sends a signal to servicemembers and their commanders that the workshops are unnecessary, thereby discouraging participation. Therefore, my bill will require DOD to ensure that all eligible servicemembers participate in the core curriculum and one of the 2-day workshops. As with the core curriculum, participation in a 2-day workshop could be waived for certain departing servicemembers, including service-

members with specialized skills who are needed to support an imminent deployment.

In addition, the bill would allow servicemembers who do not wish to participate to opt out of the training. However, the ultimate goal is to ensure that more departing servicemembers receive this targeted training and to boost the current 15 percent participation rate.

There is far more that we can do as a country to make certain that our warriors are well equipped, both practically and emotionally, to deal with the challenges of civilian life. I believe passage of this legislation would be a step in the right direction.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this bill.

DOMESTIC TERRORISM PREVENTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SCHNEIDER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to join me in the urgent effort to address the dramatically rising threat of domestic terrorism.

From a church in Charleston where worshippers were engaged in Bible study on a Wednesday night to a peaceful counterdemonstration in Charlottesville, our national consciousness has been seared by the violence of white supremacist and other extremist domestic terrorist groups. In fact, a recent FBI-Department of Homeland Security joint intelligence bulletin found white supremacist organizations were responsible for 49 homicides and 29 attacks from 2000 to 2016, more than any other domestic extremist movement.

In response to this threat, today I am introducing the Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act, which makes smart changes to ensure our Federal agencies are effectively coordinating on monitoring these terrorist organizations and better able to prevent acts of violence. This is companion legislation to the bill introduced by Senator DURBIN in the Senate.

I thank him for his leadership, as well as my colleagues in the House, Ranking Member BENNIE THOMPSON, Representatives ROBIN KELLY, LOU CORREA, and VICENTE GONZALEZ, for joining me in this effort. Working together, we can crack down on these domestic terrorist organizations and ultimately save lives.

RECOGNIZING FEBRUARY AS CTE MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, February is Career and Technical Education Month. As co-chair of the Career and Technical Edu-

cation Caucus and a senior member of the Committee on the Education and the Workforce, I have long been aware of the importance of career and technical education programs that provide learners of all ages career-ready skills.

From agriculture to the arts, from marketing to manufacturing, CTE programs work to develop America's most valuable resources: its people. Together, with Representative JIM LANGEVIN, my CTE Caucus co-chair, we will introduce a resolution officially designating February as CTE Month.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of my colleagues to sign on as cosponsors because CTE truly benefits all Americans.

CTE is taught in a range of settings, from high schools and area technical centers to technical and 2-year community colleges. In total, 12.5 million high school and college students are enrolled in CTE programs across the Nation.

Just last week, President Trump expressed his commitment to CTE during his first State of the Union Address. President Trump said: "Let us invest in workforce development and job training. Let us open great vocational schools so our future workers can learn a craft and realize their full potential."

Fortunately, the House unanimously passed the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act last June. I authored this bill with Representative RAJA KRISHNAMOORTHY. It aims to close the skills gap by modernizing Federal investment in CTE programs and connecting educators with industry stakeholders.

This is the first major overhaul to the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act since 2006. We are currently working with our colleagues in the Senate to bring up this bipartisan bill for consideration so we can get this important reauthorize signed into law.

The Perkins Act is important for educational institutions as well as businesses. Small-business owners rely upon Perkins programs to increase the number of skilled candidates in emerging sectors. Future workers in fields such as manufacturing, information technology, healthcare, and agriculture also rely on career and technical education to obtain the skills necessary for high-skill, high-wage, family-sustaining careers. Essentially, Mr. Speaker, we are providing the education tools to equip a 21st century workforce.

CTE has established itself as a path that many high-achieving students choose in pursuit of industry certifications and hands-on skills that they can use right out of high school in skills-based education programs or in college. By modernizing the Federal investment in CTE programs, we will be able to connect more educators with industry stakeholders and close the skills gap that exists in this country. There are good jobs out there, but people need to be qualified to get them.